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    -* Senate Passes Anti-Spam Bill *-
    -* Sysbug Trojan Worm Is On the Loose! *-
-* Internet Tax Bill Fails To Pass In Session *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard          "Saying it like it is!"
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This will likely be a short issue this week due to the usually slow news during this holiday week. So while you're perusing the pages this week, I'll sneak into the fridge and grab a few leftovers. And then I'll look for the Bromo!

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The folks at AtariArchives.org are thrilled to announce that the full text of the classic computer book Digital Deli is now available on the Web. Published in 1984 and subtitled "The Comprehensive, User-Lovable Menu of Computer Lore, Culture, Lifestyles and Fancy," Digital Deli offers a unique perspective on computers and their users in the golden age of

microcomputing.

It is available at <http://www.atariarchives.org/deli/>

The book was written by more than 100 contributors and edited by Steve Ditlea. Contributors include computing pioneers Ralph Baer, Steve Wozniak, Nolan Bushnell, Robert Moog, Bill Gates, and Mitch Kapor, in addition to well-known writers and pundits, such as Stan Veit, Steven Levy, Howard Rheingold, and Esther Dyson.

In it, you can read:

- how Paul Lutus wrote the Apple Writer word processor in a tiny, secluded Oregon cabin
- how Ken Uston used the first practical computer to count cards in a Las Vegas casino
- about the development of RACTER, early software that would synthesize prose
- about Blaise Pascal, Ada Lovelace, and other great "computer eccentrics"
- about John Draper and other pioneering phone phreaks
- about online etiquette circa 1984
- ...and much more

"I've always been struck by how much of the history of technology is missing from the Net. It's as if anything predating the World Wide Web's creation simply didn't exist," Steve Ditlea, editor of the book, said. "Thanks to atariarchives.org anyone curious about the state of personal computing circa 1984 can now access a book that has been out of print for nearly two decades."

This is the 21st classic computing book to be made available at AtariArchives.org. The site launched in April 2000 with the goal of digitally preserving books, software, and other information about classic computers.

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Well, Thanksgiving Day has come and gone, and I've been walking around holding my stomach all day. It's my own fault, but when I get around turkey I just lose control.

But that's not what I came to talk to ya about. I came to talk about...

The government. <grin>

I've been a bit put out lately by a rather disturbing development within our governing and intelligence communities. I'm talking about what is commonly known as The Patriot Act.

The Patriot Act is basically an abridgement of our current laws which govern how an intelligence gathering or investigative organization must act while investigating or apprehending a suspect.

The Patriot Act, a child of what I'm sure will come to be known as the "9-11 era", says that certain investigative bodies (the FBI, for one) may simply do away with the bother of having to get a warrant or even a judge's okay before obtaining personal documents.

Of course, it's not carte blanche. The agency must file a "national security letter" saying that the investigation is necessary and terrorism-related. This national security letter, or NSL, is filed with... wait for it... THEMSELVES! After all, divulging the NSL to another agency or authority introduces another possibility of leaking the information to the bad guys, right? Well, maybe.

Yeah, nice system of checks and balances there, huh? They need only file a sealed letter with themselves saying that they're allowed to obtain personal records that any other agency in the country would need a warrant or judge's permission to obtain because they have told themselves that the information is necessary to fight the war on terrorism.

There was a "Patriot Act II" that would have extended the reach of these powers for our noble, trustworthy intelligence community, but there was enough of an uproar in congress that it was neatly beaten back down into the hole from which it had come.

Another disaster averted, right? Not so, unfortunately. One of the major downfalls of the intelligence community is that they must be funded by tax dollars. Unlike most governmental appropriations though, their appropriations are kept as secret and low-key as possible. This is the next-best thing to being funded completely in secret.

One of the really 'neat' features of the american governmental system is that things can be "tacked on" to an existing bill. Oddly enough, it is not necessary that the amendment have anything whatsoever to do with the original portion of the bill.

So, using this system, the Justice Department had an amendment tacked on to an intelligence appropriations bill that extends the powers of the Patriot Act to broaden the definitions of 'financial transaction' and 'financial institution'. Transactions with insurance agencies, real estate agents, travel agents and even eBay. Hell, they're even putting pressure on the U.S. Postal Service to turn over private information. Because the intelligence community really does need to shield their budgets and how they are used, the whole tangled mess was passed behind closed doors without discussion or debate.

All of this might not be too hard for the legal system to deal with if it wasn't for one simple thing that I forgot to mention... GAG ORDERS!

That's right. The FBI can now obtain personal and private information about you from an institution without judicial oversight and then issue that institution a gag order so that they can't even tell you that they had to give someone the information!

It seems that, with an amendment to an appropriations bill, the intelligence community has found a way to do an "end run" around due process.

It pains me to say this, but I think it's time for a small dose of civil disobedience. Institutions MUST blatantly disobey these gag orders. While the legal ramifications might seem daunting, the fact is that someone like SBC or eBay refusing to turn over records of transactions without a warrant, or their refusal to obey a gag order could only serve to drag this whole thing out into the light of day. And like most things that are bad, they can't stand light.

The main argument that I've heard about why the intelligence community wants to do things this way is that it's "too hard" for them, when dealing with terrorists, to have to obtain a warrant or to expose the operation to judicial review.

Well, I've got news for you, friends and neighbors. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE HARD! It's not supposed to be easy. The fact is that, if it's difficult... if you have to undergo a couple of different types of review and have to expose your plans to the judiciary, and you're still allowed to do what you're doing, you can be pretty sure that you are on the right track.

Not having anyone look over your shoulder and not being answerable to anyone is a sure recipe for disaster. Not being subject to judicial or legal review means that a citizen could be investigated and even imprisoned without benefit of judicial review for any amount of time and without any representation save what the "spy team" decides that they should have.

It's time to make your thoughts known. Take a look at the justice department's explanation (<http://www.lifeandliberty.gov/>) and think about it. Do a little Einsteinian thought experiment and see where it leads. Give your Congressman or Senator a call or email or fax and tell them what you think. The intelligence community may not be directly answerable to us, but the people that they are answerable to (Senate and Congress) are. No one ever made things better by keeping silent. Let your voice be heard. And most of all... If you're part of a large corporation, let your management, your employees, your stockholders and your customers know what you think about all of this.

The law should be a shield, not a sword.

Those are my few meager words of wisdom. In closing I'd like to include a couple of quotes from some people who were much smarter than I. Think about them.

"I believe there are more instances of the abridgement of freedoms of the people by gradual and silent encroachment of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpations."

-James Madison

A government resting on the minority is an aristocracy, not a Republic, and could not be safe with a numerical and physical force against it, without a standing army, an enslaved press and a disarmed populace."

-- James Madison

"Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficial. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding."

--Louis D. Brandeis

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

-- Benjamin Franklin

Now let's get to the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
=====

Paul Lefebvre asks about getting a CDROM to work with his Falcon:

"I have recently purchased a Falcon030 and am trying to get it to work with an AppleCD 300e Plus SCSI CD-ROM drive. My Falcon has TOS 4.04 and is running V6.04 of the Atari Hard Disk Driver (AHDI). I also have ExtenDos 1.4 (yes, it's a bit old).

When I boot the Falcon, it says:

SCSI Devices: Unit 0: Not Responding

But the ExtenDos set up seems to work OK as the driver is recognized (as a Matsushita) and I get the message that says logical drive P: has been installed.

If I do an `!Install Devices!`, drive P: will get added to the desktop. However, double-clicking on the drive always brings up this message:
`!Drive P: is not responding. Please check the disk drive, or insert a disk.!`

I have the following hardware on the SCSI chain and I'm at a loss to know if it is set up correctly. I have tried lots of different combinations, but nothing seems to work:

- * AppleCD 300e Plus connected to the Falcon via a SCSI 50-pin centronics to a SCSI 2 50 pin cable. On the CD-ROM I also have the cable plugged into what may be a pass-through terminator block. It is set as SCSI device 5.
- * Chained to the CD-ROM is my DaynaPort SCSI/Link-T with a SCSI 50-pin centronics to a DB25 cable. This is set as SCSI device 3 and has its terminator dip switch set to `!1!`, which according to the web page means to terminate.
- * Both units are powered on when I boot the Falcon and there is a CD in the CD-ROM. I am not currently using the Daynaport for anything yet since I haven't yet put the software on the Falcon.

I am thinking I may not have the terminators set up properly, but I don't really have any way to know.

Any help that anyone can provide would be greatly appreciated."

Brian Roland asks Paul:

"What Hard Disk driver is installed?"

There are a couple of different ways ExtenDOS can get at CD-ROMS, depending on the version you have and so on. ExtenDOS can work stand alone...or it can go through the SCSI processor of disk driver software that supports SCSIDRV. In other words...ExtenDOS can install and use a SCSI.RAM of it's own, or it can try to use an already existing one.

Once we've established what SCSI/disk driver you have installed...let's first try to get it working independent of any hard disk disk driver software. Use your hard drive set-up utility to configure it so that it totally ignores the ID that your CD-ROM unit is set for. It could be that what ever hard driver software you're using is conflicting somehow. Having it 'skip' ID 5 certainly will not hurt, and just 'might' solve the problem.

Next, let's take a look at the CD you have in the drive. Make sure it's not damaged, or possibly a home burned job done on a finicky burner. Is it an ISO format? If it's a disk that was made by, or for a Mac, it just might need an additional driver set up with Extendos before you can read said disk. Check the ExtenDOS docs carefully, as it has a section that explains how to read Mac CDs. Some older versions of ExtenDOS required you to set up two different logical drives on the same device....one for accessing ISO CDs, the other for Mac CDs.

Finally....

There are indeed some Mac CD-ROM devices made (Phase-writer in particular) over the years that had an optimized for Macintosh mode. If your drive has this...it usually can be disabled via jumper. If your drive has it...disable it. I'm not real clear on the differences between Mac and PC mode on such a drive...but I think it has something to do with devices on LUN1 rather than LUN0 (each SCSI ID can have two LUNs, and apparently some CD-ROM drivers can't see the second LUN??? I'm guessing here...???).

Beyond this...It's likely a cable or termination issue. Make sure that the last device in the chain, and only the last device is terminated.

Also...it appears that ?some/all? Falcons...for whatever reason(s) don't supply 5v termination power. Devices set up to SCSI II specs will need to get this 5v from somewhere or they won't work properly. Drives intending to be compatible with multitudes of systems usually have a variety of jumper settings revolving around this 5v current. If your drive can get term power from itself, this will usually set things straight. Sometimes, and more and more common each year...you find devices that expect this 5v to be there, and can not be set to get it any other way. If you run across such a device, then you need to find a way to get term power on your SCSI bus. The easiest thing to do, is to have a quality/compatible, TRUE SCSI II (Seagate stuff is excellent in this regard) drive on the chain, and set the jumpers so that it supplies 5v termination power to the BUS, and from then on, anytime you install a new device it can be set to get termination power from the bus, or from itself (either is fine...but now you have 5v there for drives that MUST get it from the bus). Another option is a bit more complex, and can be confusing. This option is to get 5v from an external source and run it through a diode to the termination line in your SCSI cable. This 5v can come from your drive's power supply, the

Falcon's, or you can even buy an adequate brick type power supply at your favorite electronic supply store and tap it in. Which line is it?

That's a good question! The SCSI specs I've seen say that term power is on pin 26, and that pin 25 is 'unused'. This gets even more confusing when you start mixing 25, 50, and larger pin SCSI cable standards. A few of the Atari SCSI hosts claim to use pin 25 to get their power (I believe this refers to a 25pin type cable...while on a 50pin/lead cable it's gonna be on pin 26?)...I myself am still confused about this...so ask around if you don't have any SCSI device that can put termination power on the bus, and I'm sure some of the more knowledgeable people here will get you on track."

'Jon' adds his experiences:

"I just had the same problem with an Apple 600E. The drives are embedded with Apple code and will not be seen by the Atari or a PC. Ditch the drive and get a full scsi compliant unit. I had to."

Paul tells Jon:

"That's interesting. I hope I don't have to toss the drive. I based my drive purchase on the page at Anodyne that says the AppleCD 300 (and 600) would work with it. Of course I am running a much older version of ExtenDOS (just 1.4, not Pro or Gold). I'll check with Roger Burrows to see if he has any recommendations. Perhaps I'll get lucky and just need his new software.

<http://www.anodynesoftware.com/egold/drives.htm> "

Dennis Vermeire tells Paul:

"Of course you don't have to toss the drive, in the mid 90's hundreds of Atarians used these drives on their Atari.

Go

to the chapelie ftp server <ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be/atari/> and download SPIN! or METADOS, and that's all there is to it really. I've no idea how good the current versions of ExtenDOS Pro and Gold are, but the older versions weren't much to shout about... :-/

SPIN or METADOS don't have an installation program, but it's quite easy to set up, just put the whole lot in the AUTO folder and edit the config.sys file like this: for a CD-R connected to the SCSI port with ID 5:

```
*BOS, C:\AUTO\SCSI_CD.BOS, Y:15
```

```
*DOS, C:\AUTO\ISO9660F.DOS, P:Y
```

And that's all there is to it, when you reboot you should be able to access the CD-ROM as drive P.

When you opt to install SPIN! (the better choice) then the config.sys should look like this:

```
*BOS, C:\AUTO\SPIN_SD.BOS, Y:15
```

```
*DOS, C:\AUTO\ISO9660F.DOS, P:Y
```

Note that you need to download both programs, SPIN! comes without a *.DOS driver, but there's one included in METADOS.

With both these drivers you'll be able to read most formats and also play Audio CD's, SPIN in addition can also read Mac HFS CD's and extract audio tracks to WAV.

My 300e and 600e used to have their termination factory set, so you'll either have to use it as the last device in the chain or open up the case and remove the terminators. "

Julian Wolfe asks about upgrading RAM:

"I need some help...I'd like to upgrade my 520ST to 4Mb by way of removing/replacing the soldered-in RAM., and installing DIP chips (w/sockets) Can anyone tell me what chips/sockets to use?

I will probably be ordering from Jameco (www.jameco.com)"

'Tim' tells Julian:

"I found it was easier and cheaper just buying a 1040STe with 4MB from eBay! It is in pretty good shape too and works just fine."

Benoît Morrisette adds his experiences:

I did it a few years ago and i do not recommend it UNLESS you are an expert with a soldering iron. If only one of those solder joints is cold, you get lots of problems! Look at the result:
<http://pages.infinit.net/benoitm/Atari.jpg>"

Fred Pecourt adds:

"You might find some useful information about some ram upgrade projects here :
http://atari4ever.free.fr/modules.php?name=Downloads&d_op=viewdownload&cid=4

I am myself working on an internal ide + tos + 14Mb ram upgrade for STE (STF would need adaptor) but won't have a working solution before months... "

'Antonio' asks about emulating an ST on PC and Mac:

"What are (and where can they be found) the best ST emulators when running Windows XP and Mac OS X? I prefer emulators that can be dl'ed 'ready to run' and do not need to be compiled."

Paul Caillet tells Paul:

"STeem (WinXP)
<http://www.blimey.strayduck.com/>

Saint (WinXP)
<http://leonard.oxg.free.fr/Saint/saint.html>

Hatari (Mac OS X)

<http://hatari.sourceforge.net/>

MagiC Mac X (Mac OS X)

<http://www.application-systems.de/magicmacx/> "

'Oes' adds:

"Hatari doesn't run too well on my OS X Mac, I prefer Nostalgia:

<http://users.skynet.be/sky39147/> "

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

=~::~~::~=

A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

House Passes Anti-Internet Spam Bill

The U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly on Saturday for a bill to outlaw most Internet spam and create a "do not spam" registry for those who do not wish to receive unsolicited junk e-mail.

Online marketers who flood e-mail in boxes with pornography and get-rich-quick schemes would face multimillion dollar fines and jail time under the measure. It passed by a vote of 392-5 at dawn on Saturday, following an all-night session of the House that was largely devoted to a separate Medicare bill.

The Senate unanimously passed a similar anti-spam bill last month, but it must assent to the House changes before the measure can become law. The Senate is expected to do so in the coming days.

Anti-spam bills have died in Congress for six years while unsolicited commercial e-mail has grown from a nuisance to a plague that threatens to derail the Internet's most popular means of communication.

Spam now makes up more than half of all e-mail, according to several surveys, and even online marketers have come to support some restrictions.

Lawmakers said spam has become a top constituent concern, and they also faced hundreds of unwanted messages daily.

Spam "cripples computer networks and makes regular e-mail checking a seemingly endless hassle," said House Energy and Commerce Chairman Billy

Tauzin.

Lawmakers faced additional pressure to put a national law into place after California passed a tough anti-spam bill earlier this year. Online marketers say it would be difficult to comply with a patchwork of conflicting state laws.

The House bill, which would override state anti-spam laws, would allow businesses to send unsolicited e-mail to Internet users until they are asked to stop, an approach that some anti-spam activists say would only lead to more spam.

It would outlaw spammers' attempts to cover their tracks by requiring marketers to identify themselves clearly and avoid misleading subject lines or return addresses. Pornographic messages would have to be clearly labeled as such to allow users to more easily filter them out.

Violators would face millions of dollars in fines and up to five years in jail. The bill would not allow individuals to sue spammers.

The bill also authorizes the Federal Trade Commission to set up a "Do Not Spam" registry of Internet users who wish to receive no unsolicited e-mail at all, similar to the Federal Trade Commission's popular "Do Not Call" list.

It also would outlaw cell-phone spam, which is commonplace in Europe and Asia. Under the provision, subscribers to cell phone services would not receive text message spam unless they have provided express authorization.

America Online Inc. applauded the bill, saying it would help turn the tide against spam. "This law will be a significant weapon for the online industry in the ongoing fight to can the spam and thwart the spam kingpins," the company said in a statement.

Senate Passes Bill to Curb Spam

A bill designed to reduce the reams of unwanted e-mail - or "spam" - clogging the nation's in-boxes today cleared its last major hurdle on the way to the White House.

The U.S. Senate approved the Can Spam Act as part of its attempt to wrap up business before departing for the Thanksgiving recess.

The bill is essentially the same as the one that the House of Representatives passed in a 392-5 vote last week.

President Bush intends to sign the legislation, according to a statement released by the White House Office of Management and Budget.

Conrad Burns (R-Mont.), one of the first senators to sponsor a federal anti-spam bill, said on Tuesday that lawmakers began paying attention to the problem in the last 18 months as their constituents' complaints about an unstoppable deluge of e-mails advertising pornography, mortgage refinancing services and sexual aids started mounting.

"The Can Spam bill finally gives consumers a measure of control over their in-boxes," Burns said.

The legislation would let the Federal Trade Commission establish a national "do-not-spam" list similar to the popular national "do-not-call" list. It also outlaws several common practices that spammers use to disguise the origins of their e-mail, including using falsified return addresses. Violators could face up to five years in prison and as much as \$6 million in fines.

Burns said the spam bill wouldn't have a major effect on reducing the amount of spam in consumers' inboxes until a few major violators are prosecuted and fined or jailed. He said Congress would watch closely to ensure the legislation is properly enforced.

The legislation was propelled through Congress largely on the strength of some startling statistics about the growing tide of spam on the Internet. San Francisco-based anti-spam firm Brightmail estimates that unsolicited junk e-mail accounted for 54 percent of the mail in the nation's in-boxes as of September 2003, compared to 8 percent two years earlier.

FTC Chairman Timothy Muris has questioned the feasibility of a do-not-spam registry, saying it would be cumbersome to administer and wouldn't stop rogue spammers from sending unwanted mail. Nevertheless, he said the commission would work with Congress and state and federal authorities to enforce the bill.

Anti-spam advocates are unhappy because the legislation would invalidate several state laws that are tougher on spam. California and Washington, for example, allow people to sue spammers, whereas the federal bill does not. California's law also allows fines against spammers of up to \$1,000 per e-mail message with a cap at \$1 million.

Two of the five House lawmakers who opposed the bill were California Reps. Mike Honda (D) and Zoe Lofgren (D), who criticized the measure for undermining California's law, the most strict in the nation.

"This bill has some points that are noteworthy but ultimately will have very little effect on addressing the problem of unsolicited commercial e-mail," Honda spokesman Jay Staunton said.

Anti-spam activists like John Mozena of the Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial E-Mail say the legislation caters to groups like the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), whose members, they say, are contributing to the spam problem.

The DMA, which for many years opposed anti-spam legislation, has been eager to get a federal bill on the books to protect their members from multiple state-level laws. The DMA supported the bill but raised some concerns with the do-not-spam list, which they feared would harm "legitimate" marketers.

Mozena said that the bill is misguided because it creates a legal framework for e-mail marketers instead of requiring them to stop sending unsolicited e-mail altogether.

Minor changes made to the congressional anti-spam bill in the Senate will require the House to vote once again on the measure before it can be sent to the White House. That vote is expected to happen when Congress returns after the Thanksgiving break.

Senate Fails to Extend Internet Tax Ban

A proposal to extend a federal ban on Internet access taxes is dead for the year, as the Senate was unable to reach an agreement, officials said Tuesday.

Bob Stevenson, a spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., said senators were unable to reach a compromise to allow an extension of the ban, which expired Nov. 1. The Senate is wrapping up business for the year and is moving toward adjournment.

The ban, first passed in 1998, prevents state and local governments from taxing Internet access services such as America Online and Earthlink. It also limits state and local governments' ability to levy taxes that target Internet commerce. It doesn't address the broader issue of simplifying sales taxes on Internet transactions.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., sponsor of the bill to permanently ban taxes on Internet access, said he was given similar information.

"My sense is nothing will be done this year," Wyden said in an interview.

The expiration of the tax ban raises the possibility that local governments could pass laws taxing Internet access services. That's unlikely, state and local officials said, since there was no rush to tax Internet services when the ban expired temporarily in the past.

The debate is expected to resume when Congress returns in 2004.

The Senate has been gridlocked for several weeks over efforts to renew the Internet tax ban.

State and local governments, backed by Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, opposed the expanded measure, saying it would curb states' authority to tax existing telecommunications services.

The Multistate Tax Commission released a study in September saying the Internet tax bill's expanded definitions could let telecommunications companies avoid state and local telephone taxes, costing local governments up to \$8.75 billion a year by 2006.

Linux 2.6 Set for Release

After a multiyear development effort, the 2.6 version of the Linux kernel is set for release in the second half of December. This is the first major Linux kernel release since 2001, when version 2.4 was launched.

Version of 2.6 will usher in a number of important improvements over its predecessor, according to Andrew Morton, who - along with Linus Torvalds - maintains the Linux kernel.

Chief among these is the ability to run servers with a greater number of processors. "For high-end and server applications, probably the most significant [upgrade] is in scalability," Morton told NewsFactor. "2.6 scales to more CPUs, more memory, more disks and larger disks."

Version 2.6 "extends Linux both on the small and the large," IDC analyst Dan Kusnetzky told NewsFactor, noting that "not only will it support more processors - it will use those processors more effectively and thus see a performance improvements, even on today's machines."

Version 2.6's ability to power larger servers is critical in the OS's move toward greater acceptance in the corporate data center. Linux has historically been relegated to edge applications, like print or Web servers, because it has had difficulty scaling up past four- or eight-way servers.

Version 2.6 will scale up to handle 32-processor servers, enabling it to handle a greater array of mission-critical tasks. The new kernel has improved support for NUMA (non-uniform memory access), which speeds data flow between processor and memory on a high-end server.

"There are significant file-system improvements that will make systems operations faster, so that should make database systems and data-intensive applications perform better," Kusnetzky said.

With this forthcoming kernel release, Linux "is growing to where it's going to be giving high-end systems like Solaris and AIX a run for their money," Jeff Bates, director of the Open Source Development Network online, told NewsFactor.

For Linux to continue to grow its market share, it must avoid splitting into different versions. This pitfall, known as "forking," hampered Unix, forcing buyers to choose between vendors that sell non-interoperable flavors.

To prevent this from happening with Linux, version 2.6 developers built in many of the minor tweaks and upgrades that leading Linux vendors have incorporated into their commercial versions.

This means that the forthcoming kernel will have fewer differences between its core and the commercially available Linux versions, a key improvement over version 2.4.

Some Linux vendors historically have tried to avoid veering too far from the kernel, to prevent forking. "We are sometimes criticized for being too slow in releasing some of the new features, and we take that as a fair criticism," SuSE Linux spokesperson Joe Eckert told NewsFactor. "But we will not issue anything that is not totally supported and approved by the open-source community."

Coinciding with a major desktop-Linux push by major vendors like IBM and Sun Microsystems, version 2.6 is expected to offer improved desktop performance. For example, USB and Firewire will work better, Kusnetzky said.

The new kernel will run faster on the desktop than did 2.4, noted Morton. Major desktop upgrades include "the improved responsiveness of the CPU scheduler and decreased stalls of the whole system when under heavy disk load," he said.

Coinciding with the arrival of 64-bit processors on the desktop, version 2.6 has been coded for better compatibility with these next generation chips. The new kernel is optimized for AMD's Athlon64 desktop chip.

Although support for 64-bit chips has been backported into version 2.4,

"2.6 has been built from the ground up with support for 64-bit," Bates said.

To ride the ever-greater proliferation of mobile devices, from handhelds to all manner of low-end machine controllers, version 2.6 incorporates uCLinux, a Linux support system for micro-controllers.

"For embedded systems, the major change is the merge of the uCLinux architecture, which allows the mainstream kernel to support several low-end micro-controller CPUs which do not have memory-management hardware," Morton said.

Version 2.6 adds support for a number of embedded processors, including products by Motorola, Hitachi, and NEC.

Though version 2.6 is due by the end of this year, it is not expected to ship in commercial releases until well into 2004. SuSE's version 9 of its server product, due out in late spring, will be based on the 2.6 kernel, Eckert said, noting that SuSE currently offers software that includes a test version of the new kernel.

Both Red Hat and SuSE, however, have backported some of the improvements from 2.6 into their current releases, which are built on the 2.4 kernel.

Microsoft To Test Providing Security Updates On CD

Microsoft is considering a release of security updates on CD for users of its older operating systems who lack broadband connections to the Internet, according to an e-mail sent to prospective beta testers on Tuesday.

The e-mail invites beta testers who are using Windows 98, Windows 98 Second Edition, and Windows Millennium to join a test of a CD that will include a pertinent critical security patches found on the WindowsUpdate Web site.

"This security update CD will be of special benefit to customers with slow Internet connections and for those customers who typically do not visit the Microsoft Web site to download updates for their computers," the e-mail read.

Microsoft did not disclose a possible release date for the security update CD, but beta user applications will be accepted only until December 5.

The Redmond, Wash.-based developer has been criticized by some analysts for relying exclusively on the Web-based WindowsUpdate service, which users with slow dial-up connections often ignore because of the large file sizes of security fixes.

Trojan Horse Making Its Way Into Windows Systems

A new Trojan horse hidden in an e-mail purported to be carrying pornographic pictures is beginning to make the rounds on the Internet.

The Trojan is known as Sysbug and provides its creator with a backdoor into infected systems running versions of Windows from 95 through XP. It copies

itself to the Windows installation folder and also adds a new registry entry that ensures the Trojan will run every time the PC starts up.

Once resident on a computer, Sysbug is capable of copying a variety of data about the machine and sending it back to its creator, according to Sophos Inc., an anti-virus company based in Lynnfield, Mass. The Trojan gathers data on e-mail accounts and remote access accounts, then opens TCP port 5555 and listens for commands from its author.

The Trojan arrives in an e-mail with an attachment that is zipped and contains an executable. The e-mail begins:

"Hello my dear Mary,

I have been thinking about you all night. I would like to apologize for the other night when -"

The message then goes into more explicit detail.

The e-mail comes from james2003@hotmail.com and the subject line says "Re[2]: Mary."

Microsoft Employee Gets Jail Time for Fraud

A former Microsoft employee was sentenced to 17 months in prison Tuesday after fraudulently ordering more than \$6 million in software and then selling it to a third party.

Kori Robin Brown, 31, was an administrative assistant in Microsoft's Xbox division when she used her work computer to order millions of dollars worth of high-end software from ClientLogic, a business providing warehouse facilities for Microsoft.

She then sold the software to a third party for between \$50,000 and \$100,000, according to the office of the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington, where Brown was sentenced. The crimes were committed sometime between October 13, 1998 and August 4, 2000, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Because Brown either had the software sent directly to her or to entities identified as charities, and not for legitimate business reasons, she was sentenced for mail fraud, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Seattle U.S. District Judge Marsha J. Pechman sentenced Brown to 17 months in prison, followed by three years of supervision after release. The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

Brown is not the first Microsoft employee to be nabbed for misappropriating software. In June, former Microsoft employee Richard Gregg was accused of ordering \$17 million worth of software through Microsoft's internal purchasing system and selling it for personal gain.

Additionally, Daniel Feussner was accused of similar charges last December and fired.

Woman Leads Fight Against Nigerian Fraudsters

Five years ago, three Nigerian men tracked Frieda Springer-Beck to her village in Bavaria, put a gun to her head and told her to drop charges against a man she accused of staging an elaborate international fraud.

Now the 54-year-old German woman's fight against Nigeria's notorious junk-mail comen is starting to see results.

Since May, Nigeria's new anti-fraud unit, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), has arrested more than 200 people for junk mail scams, including the man Springer-Beck says duped her out of \$360,000 in 1993.

The so-called 419 scam, named after the article in Nigeria's criminal code outlawing it, has become so successful over the last 20 years that campaigners say it is now one of the African country's biggest exports after oil, natural gas and cocoa.

The fraud swindles hundreds of millions of dollars every year from people around the world who respond to junk e-mails promising them a share of nonexistent fortunes in return for an advance fee.

"I know through my own experience how you feel when you say you have been cheated. Nobody is in a position to help you or wants to listen at all," said Springer-Beck, who moved to Lagos last year to push ahead with her campaign.

In 1994 Springer-Beck formed the International Nigerian Interest Group, an association of fraud victims battling the swindlers through Nigeria's notoriously slow and corrupt justice system. The association is currently handling 89 cases.

None has led to a conviction and, up until May, the association had brought about only one arrest.

Nigeria's inaction over the fraud helped earn it the dubious distinction of the world's second-most corrupt country after Bangladesh from the sleaze watchdog group Transparency International.

Nuhu Ribadu, who heads the EFCC, said property worth \$200 million has now been confiscated in connection with more than 30 cases now before court.

A member of parliament was among those arrested, and others are being held for the biggest ever 419 swindle, which was worth \$180 million and brought down a Brazilian bank.

"Our intention is to bring them to justice for the first time...to return the money to the victims," said Ribadu.

"419 has destroyed the credibility of our country. As a result of this it is almost impossible to do business. No one takes us seriously," he said.

Springer-Beck's own 419 saga began in 1993, when a letter arrived for her recently deceased husband asking him to come to Nigeria to collect his interest on an investment in a Nigerian electricity plant.

She got in touch with the author of the letter, who recommended a lawyer to help her get all the information she needed. She took on the lawyer only

after checking his credentials with the German Embassy.

On her first of several trips to Lagos, Springer-Beck was taken to what she thought were the offices of the Central Bank of Nigeria. Officials presented her with documents displaying her late husband's letterhead, showing he had invested a large, but undisclosed, amount of money in the country.

"Today I know it was the building in front of the Central Bank of Nigeria," she said, adding that she was fooled by security guards wearing CBN uniforms at the gate.

Although doubtful at first, she eventually paid her lawyer the \$360,000 he requested as a down-payment for staking her claim to the investment. After five months she realized she had fallen victim to a scam.

In August 1993, she tracked the alleged fraudster to his home in downtown Lagos and confronted him.

"He laughed at me, called me a snake," she said. "I told him if you don't give me back my money I will find a way you will never forget me."

In 1995 the lawyer was arrested and held on remand for two years only to be released without standing trial, and the case has been adjourned repeatedly since.

But in May this year, he was arrested again by the newly created EFCC, and charged with defrauding a Dutchman of \$1.7 million.

Springer-Beck is optimistic.

"The cases will be successful. It is only a matter of time. You can't change things at once which grew up over 20 years."

L.A. Official: Computer Labels Offensive

A county official has asked computer and video equipment vendors to consider eliminating the terms "master" and "slave" from equipment because they may be considered offensive.

"Based on the cultural diversity and sensitivity of Los Angeles County, this is not an acceptable identification label," according to an e-mail sent to vendors on Nov. 18. The memo asks manufacturers, suppliers and contractors to change or remove any labels on components "that could be interpreted as discriminatory or offensive in nature."

The county's 39 departments also were told to identify equipment with offensive labels.

"We got a note back from IBM saying thank you for bringing this to our attention and we'll take a look at this," said Joe Sandoval, who wrote the memo. Sandoval is division manager of purchasing and contract services for the county's Internal Services Department.

The term "master" and "slave", when applied to electronic equipment, describes one device controlling another.

In May, a black employee of the Probation Department filed a discrimination complaint with the county Office of Affirmative Action Compliance after noticing the words on a videotape machine.

"This individual felt that it was offensive and inappropriate ... given the experiences that this country has gone through in respect to slavery," office director Dennis A. Tafoya said.

The issue was solved by putting tape over the labels and replacing "master" and "slave" with "primary" and "secondary," Tafoya said.

Although Tafoya said his office did not find discrimination in the case, he added, "I think we constantly need to be conscious of these issues."

Sandoval said the county is making a suggestion, not trying to dictate political correctness.

"Knowing that it's an industry standard, there's no way that I'm going to stop buying that equipment," he said.

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